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10 ORIENTATION--information especially likely to be needed by users of a file as a frame of reference for understanding the materials classified elsewhere; organization of the file, special coding decisions, and evaluation of the file.

GUIDE TO THE AR7 KHASI FILE

[The AR7 Khasi file is concerned with the Mon-Khmer-speaking Khasi people living in the United Khasi-Jaintia Hills district of Assam in northeastern India. It also contains some information on the very closely related Jaintias who live in the southeastern part of this area and the Lynngams in the western part of the area. Though all Khasis fundamentally share the same language and social structure, their culture, dialects, economy and political organization do vary. They are generally matrilineal in social organization, having matrilineal clans and a social class system. Their economy is based on agriculture, with emphasis on potatoes or rice depending on the location.

There are 21 sources in the Khasi file, all of them in English except for five translations from the German (2: Stegmiller, 3: Stegmiller, 4: Stegmiller, 5: Stegmiller, 6: Becker and 7: Becker). There are three major sources in the file, 1: Gurdon, 15: Nakane and 19: Assam. 1: Gurdon, by a British army officer, is a general, systematic ethnography of the Khasi, based on three years experience with the tribe around the year 1900. 15: Nakane, by a Japanese ethnologist, is a comparative study of Garo and Khasi matrilineal systems based on fieldwork in 1955 and 1956. 19: Assam is a general economic survey of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills area containing a great deal of detailed statistical information. Sources 2 through 7, by the Roman Catholic missionaries Stegmiller and Becker, emphasize various religious and cermonial customs of the period 1905-1920. 8: Gurdon and 16: McCormick are cultural summaries, with 16: McCormick being much better organized and being a good place to get an overview of the culture. Three sources (9: Godwin-Austen, 10: Clarke, and 18: Godwin-Austen) deal with stone monuments and their cultural implications. Sources concentrating on kinship and social organization are 13: Mukherjee, 14: Roy,

and 21: Ehrenfels. 11: Chattopadhyay contains a miscellany of cultural information, 12: Mukherjee et al. is a survey of house types, 17: Banerjee a description of a festival, and 20: Hunter a general description of the Khasi during the middle 1870's. This is generally a good file for comparative purposes, containing a good deal of information in depth on social organization and economics. However, most of the other subjects are only superficially covered. The researcher should be aware of subcultural variations within the society and of possible confusion in the data between Khasi, Jaintia and Lynngam. The file also has some historical depth, with several sources dating from the 1870s and with other material relating to the 1950s. The file was processed between 1956 and 1974.]